



My Church

COLLEGE & GRADUATES

Spirit & Life



WWW.SMFSUS.ORG

HIS HOLINESS POPE TAWADROS II



**118TH POPE OF ALEXANDRIA AND
PATRIARCH OF THE SEE OF SAINT MARK**



Spirit and Life

Table of Contents

	Page
St. Mark's Festival Anthem- Spirit and Life	2
My Church...Spirit and Life	3
Study of Book of Revelation	7
The Holy Spirit	14
Divine Wisdom of Sanctifying the Mind	19
A Cloud of Witnesses	22
My Coptic Church	25
Atheism	26
Memorization	31
Coptic	33
Hymns & Rituals	41

Visit the St. Mark Festival's website at www.smfsus.org
to find the material for the festival and
for guidelines and information on the tests

Spirit and Life



St. Mark's Festival 2020 Anthem

My precious Church

Heaven on earth

A fortress in the world

A refuge for all. (x2)

Since Adam humanity's fallen

Separated from our calling

But Christ came, died and rose

And through Him we were restored. (x2)

My Church you are my strength

Treasury of heavenly wealth

(Sound doctrine, living rites

Leading us to the light) (x2)

House of God, a fruitful vine

My Church, spirit and life (x3)

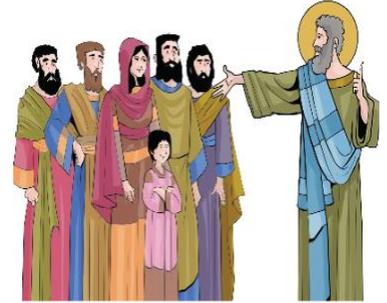
My Church... Spirit and Life

My Church

1- The Coptic Church:

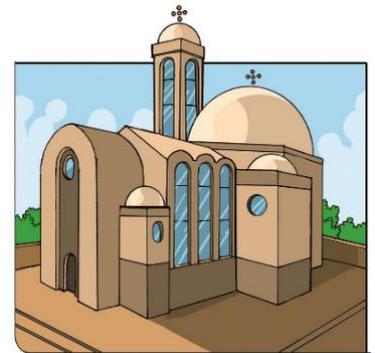
- The Church of saints and martyrs.
- The Church of theologians like, St. Athanasius, St. Dioscorus, and St. Cyril.
- The Church of monks like, St. Anthony, St. Macarius, St. Shenoute, and St. Pachom.
- The Church of martyrs. The Church offered many martyrs throughout the ages and until this day.
- The Church of evangelists. They preached the faith in many parts of the world, like St. Maurice and St. Verena who preached in Europe. The faith continues to spread through Copts all over the world.

We are one Church in rites, doctrine and history.



2- Orthodox:

- In the Liturgy we pray for **“the peace of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic orthodox Church of God.”**
 - It is one Church as God established it from the beginning, the one body of Christ.
 - It is holy because it is sanctified by the Holy Spirit living and working in its members.
 - It is universal – of all nations, peoples, tribes, and tongues. He **“desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4)**
 - It is apostolic built on the teachings of the apostles.
 - It is orthodox in doctrine and faith; we, her children, are living it in our daily lives.
 - It belongs to God who redeemed the Church.
-



3- The Church is the body of Christ comprised of the congregation of those who believe in Him, gathered together around the Holy Body and Blood of the Lord on the altar.

- The Eucharist is the foundation of the Church; the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ her bridegroom.
- When we partake of the Eucharist, we receive many blessings.



4- Blessings of Eucharist:

- **Abiding in Christ:**

“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.” (John 6:56) We become strong by the grace of God when we partake of the Holy Eucharist and defeat the wicked one.

- **Uniting with the heavenly:**

Angels and Saints are present with us during the liturgy and they intercede for us. We are all members in the body of Christ, the Church.

- **Uniting with each other:**

“For we, though many, are one bread and one body: for we all partake of that one bread” (1 Corinthians 10:17)

- **Receiving forgiveness:**

If we offer true repentance and confess our sins the Lord Jesus Christ will forgive our sins.

“Given for us for salvation, remission of sins, and eternal life to those who partake of Him.” Confession – Liturgy of the Faithful

- **Receiving salvation:**

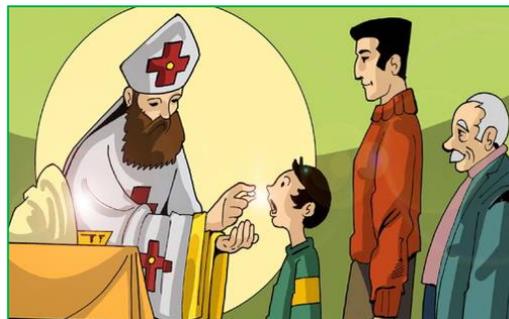
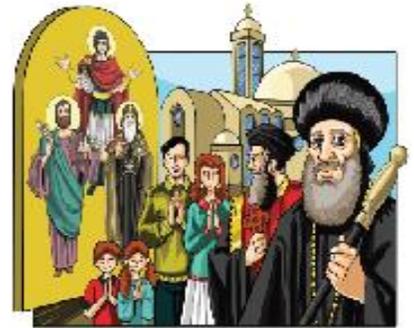
We not only receive forgiveness but also salvation from the slavery of sin.

- **Eternal life:**

“Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” (John 6:54)

- **Proclaiming the faith:**

When we eat the Body of Christ and drink of the cup, we proclaim the Lord’s Death and Resurrection until He comes. This is our mission!



My Church is Spirit:

Our human spirit is the element that relates us to God. It is how we believe in God.

The Holy Spirit of God is not the same as the human spirit, but He works in us through it.

The body submits to the human spirit that submits to the Holy Spirit.

1- The work of the Holy Spirit in the Church:

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” (Romans 8:14)

- The Holy Spirit descended on the disciples on the day of **Pentecost** after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then the Church was established, and they preached Christianity all over the world and built churches.
- **The work of the Holy Spirit in the Church Sacraments:**
The Sacraments give us an unseen grace by the work of the Holy Spirit in seen matter.
 - a. **Baptism:** It is a second birth by immersion in water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. It is the door of all the Sacraments for without it, we are not able to partake of the other Sacraments. “**Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.**” (John 3:5)
 - b. **Chrismation (Confirmation):** We receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 36 anointings for our sanctification. “**But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things.**” (1 John 2:20)
 - c. **Eucharist:** We partake of the Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and abide in Him and Him in us.
 - d. **Repentance and Confession:** A reconciliation with God when a sinner returns to Him and confesses their sins in front of the priest. “**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**” (1 John 1:9)
 - e. **Unction of the sick:** The priest anoints the sick and prays to God for the healing of their spiritual and physical sicknesses. “**Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.**” (James 5:14-15)
 - f. **Matrimony:** God created marriage since Adam and Eve and blessing marriage by attending the wedding in Cana of Galilee. “**And the two shall become one flesh. So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.**” (Matthew 19:5-6)
 - g. **Priesthood:** The Holy Spirit descends on the new priest by the laying of the hand of the bishop and gives him the gifts of priesthood. “**He breathed on them, and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”**” (John 20:22)



My Church is Life:

Our spiritual life and service to others is the reflection of our membership in the body of Christ (the Church) and the work of the Holy Spirit in us in our daily life.

1- Personal life:

The Church arranged for us means by which we can grow spiritually within the Church.

- a. **Confession:** Confession should be regular and honest paired with true repentance and obedience of the instructions of the priest, with complete faith that the Spirit of God is working in the Sacrament.

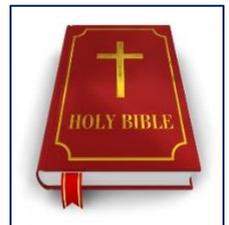


- b. **Prayer:** It is our relationship with God through which we are fed spiritually. We have:
- The Divine Liturgy, the peak of all prayers.



- The Agpeya prayers that provide us prayers for every feeling.
- The Jesus Prayer: **“My Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me the sinner”**.
- Our own prayers where we can talk freely with God about anything.

- c. **The Holy Bible:** The food to our spirits that gives us joy and guides our paths. **“For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light.”** (Proverbs 6:23)



- d. **Spiritual gatherings:**

We meet as a congregation to pray and praise God and grow spiritually.

- e. **Fasting and asceticism:**

To control the body in order for the spirit to soar.

2- Serving others:

- Leadership and teaching
- Acts of mercy, such as visiting the sick and giving to the poor
- Acts of love and having good relationships with others
- Acts of worship, such as praying for others, etc.



By serving our communities, we become witnesses for the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants us to be the light of the world and salt to the earth. Service helps us grow and benefits others in our families, church, and communities. **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”** (Matthew 5:16)

Study of the Book of Revelation

Revelation Chapters 19-22

The Book of Revelation is the Church's journey from earth to Heaven. In chapters 1-18, we see the striving church, struggling in a world full of tribulation and suffering, as the Lord Jesus Christ said:

**“In the world you will have tribulation;
but be of good cheer,
I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)**

Then we move our focus to the victorious church in chapters 19-22. We move to the world of holiness and eternal joy with the Lord of Glory, our Beloved Redeemer; and the congregation of the victorious saints.

Chapter 19: Victory of the Heaven

I - The Joy of Heaven in the Victory of Humanity Through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The heavenly and the earthly creatures unite in chanting “Alleluia”, glorifying and giving thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ who removed evil. This is the praise our Church uses in most of our prayers.

**“I heard a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Alleluia!
Salvation and glory and honor and power belong to the Lord our God.” (Rev. 19:1)**

The reason for cheering is the heavenly wedding: The bride of the Lamb, the Church, is ready as a congregation of the believers; from the early prophets and patriarchs, the holy apostolic patriarchs, the martyrs, and the great saints, all who satisfied the Lord with their righteous deeds who will be crowned in this heavenly wedding forever.

**“And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright,
for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints...
Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.” (Rev. 19:8-9).**



II - The Victorious Christ

- He is the Divine justice. **“A white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war.”** (Rev. 19:11)
- He is the crucified Christ. **“He is clothed with a robe dipped in blood”** (Rev. 19:13)
- He is God the Logos. **“His name is called the Word of God”** (Rev. 19:13)
- He will come with His angels who obey Him and who do nothing against His will. **“And the armies in heaven followed Him.”** (Rev. 19:14)
- His words are like a sharp-edged sword. **“Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations.”** (Rev. 19:15)
- **“And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”** (Rev. 19:16) His “thigh” refers to his humanity which is united with His divinity.

III - The Beast is Captured

- **“Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.”** (Rev. 19: 20)
- The last judgment on the beast, and the false prophet.
- The nations eat the flesh of the strong, (the destruction of the proud and great), and this is the picture of the destruction of the evil kingdom.

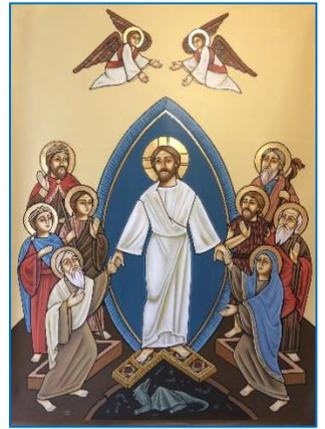


Chapter 20: Satan Bound for a Thousand Years

I - Satan bound

"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. He laid hold of the dragon, that serpent of old, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years; and he cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal on him, so that he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years were finished. But after these things he must be released for a little while." (Rev. 20:1-3)

- The descent of the angel is an order issued to him by the Lord Himself, who has **"the keys of Hades and of Death."** (Rev. 1:18). The chain is a metaphorical word meaning to restrict Satan's freedom to resist the Kingdom of God.
- After His death on the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ descended to hades and bound Satan so that he would no longer have authority over God's children.
- The reign of the thousand years began on the cross: **"The Lord reigns"** (Psalm 96:10). Then those on whom the second death has no power **"shall reign with Him a thousand years."** (Rev. 20:6).



II - The First Resurrection

- Those who rose with Christ will live the first resurrection, **"buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead."** (Colossians 2:12)
- The Lord came to the world to establish a spiritual kingdom; and those who were baptized to Christ are the ones who died and rose with Christ in the first resurrection, and Satan no longer has authority over them
"Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ." (Rev. 20:6)
"Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations." (Rev. 20:7-8)
- Here, Satan makes a spiritual war in which the Antichrist and his supporters (Gog and Magog), a symbol of the use of cruelty, violence, bloodshed and destruction, kill the saints and the church; but the Lord strengthens the believers by the resurrection of the two witnesses, after their death, and ascend to heaven.
- The final ruling: **"The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."** (Revelations 20:10)

III - Judgment Day

- A great white throne appears, and the one seated on it is Christ, from whose face the earth and the heaven have fled. This is a metaphor for His greatness and magnificence. The white horse is a symbol of peace and purity.
- He came to take away the sufferings and tribulations, and to grant His servants their reward.
- **"And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books." (Rev. 20:12)**
- The sea delivers those who are in it. The sea symbolizes the troubled world. The dead and those in the abyss will be delivered to God to be judged.
- The Book of Life is opened. Those who do not have their name written in the Book of Life were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death whereas the first death was the death of sin, and the resurrection of it is the first resurrection. Those who have shared in the first resurrection by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ will not be under the authority of the second death, as they enjoy joyous eternal life.



Chapter 21: The Holy City (The Heavenly Jerusalem)

I - A New Heaven and a New Earth

- With the coming of the Day of the Lord, there will be one church, in which there is communion of God with the faithful, and with the heavenly, and the saints and martyrs will be around the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **“Also there was no more sea.” (Rev. 21:1)** This is because the ‘sea’ symbolizes turmoil and division, but in eternity, there is peace and tranquility. There is no disease, sadness, or anxiety.
- The Heavenly Jerusalem is a bride prepared for her bridegroom: Because the kingdom of the Heaven is a heavenly wedding that brings the bridegroom, which is Christ, and his bride is the church represented by her children throughout the ages from the prophets, apostles, saints, and martyrs. Christ acquired the church with His generous blood that was shed on the cross.

“For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.” (2 Corinthians 2:11)

- Heavenly Jerusalem is the eternal abode of the victorious faithful in the presence of God.
“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away. ” (Rev. 4:21)

“He will swallow up death forever, And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces” (Isaiah 25:8).

- These matters are indeed true and faithful and will happen in their exact time. For He who said it is the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, and the Creator of all creation. **“Write, for these words are true and faithful.” (Rev. 21:5)**
- Whoever thirsts for the spiritual matters and the life with God, will receive eternal spiritual gifts from God. But spiritual struggle must take place first, and whoever prevails will inherit the heavenly glories. **“ I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts. He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son.” (Revelations 21:6-7)**



II - A Holy Church

- Celestial and heavenly.
- Coming from God and holy.
- It has the glory of God, like the most precious stone. Christ gives her glory.

III - A Catholic (Universal) and Apostolic Church

- It has a great and high wall: God is the fortress and sanctuary of the Church.
- It has 12 gates, and on the gates 12 angels, with written names which are the names of the 12 tribes of the children of Israel.
- These are the names of the men in the Old Testament; and the gates refer to the opening of the gate of faith for all nations, from all the earth.
- **“The city is laid out as a square”** referring to the four gospels which raise believers toward Heaven, where the saints rejoice.
- **“one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel.”** refers to the universal church 12 x 12, the Old Testament Church, and the New Testament Church.
- The wall: walled with God’s preservation and care.
- The foundations: precious stones which refer to the disciples of Christ, as it is an Apostolic Church, and the precious stones indicate the divine virtues.
- The 12 gates were 12 pearls. The Lord Jesus is the **“one pearl of great price.” (Matthew 13:46)**
- The unique door is Jesus. **“I am the door.” (John 10:9)**
- The street of the city is pure gold: It refers to the congregation of saints.
- There is no temple, **“for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple.” (Rev. 21:22)**
- The city had no need of light, **“for the glory of God illuminated it.” (Rev. 21:23)**
- The city is holy: no one may enter it except those redeemed by the Blood of Christ. **“There shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, of causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life .” (Rev. 21:27)**



Chapter 22: The Tree of Life

I - The River of Life:

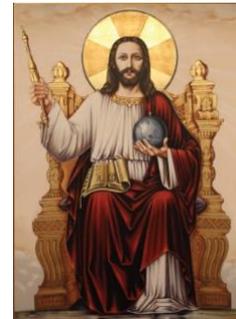
- The river is the Lord Jesus Christ who quenches every soul.
- The Holy Spirit. **"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive. (John 7:37-39)**
- The abundant grace of God.
- Eternal peace.

II - The Tree of Life:

- By the cross, Christ conquered death, and He opened the door of Paradise for us and gave us His Body and Blood.
- The fruitful tree: the congregation of believers.
- Spiritual virtues: the fruit of faith in Christ.
- The fruits of the tree refer to the children of the Kingdom.

III - The Throne of God

- **"There shall be no more curse" (Rev. 22:3)** As there will be no more sin.
- **"The throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it" (Rev. 22:3)** Where He resides in the glory of His divinity. The 'Lamb' refers to the image through Christ manifested Himself in the fullness of time on our earth.
- **"His servants serve Him" (Rev. 22:3)** The service of praise and glorification.
- Eternal Light: an everlasting existence in the presence of God (the Sun of Righteousness).



which

IV - The End of the Revelation

- **"Behold, I am coming quickly!" (Rev. 22:7)** An invitation for watchfulness and readiness for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **"Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book" (Rev. 22:7)** He who prepares for the second coming, and keeps the sayings and commandments of God.
- **"The time is at hand" (Rev. 22:10)** There is no time for slacking and carelessness, but rather time for preparedness, spiritual wakefulness, and alertness.
- **"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work." (Rev. 22:12)**
- "I am Jesus" - the root and offspring of David. He is the Creator of David, and his son in the flesh. The bright Morning Star which has no darkness at all.

Conclusion:

"And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come.

Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely." (Revelations 22:17)

- Communion with God within the Church.
- Communion with God and hearing His voice.
- Thirst for God, so that we may approach Him with prayer and by living His commandments.

"He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly." Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." (Revelations 22:20-21)

The Holy Spirit

We believe in one God with three hypostases (i.e. Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit).. As we recite in the Creed: **"Truly we believe in one God, God the Father the Pantocrator ... We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ... We believe in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father."** The hypostasis of the Holy Spirit is the third person in the Holy Trinity, and He proceeds from the Father.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is **"the Holy Spirit of God."** (Ephesians 4:30)

Yet, the Holy Spirit IS God, because "God is spirit": **"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."** (John 4:24).

In Acts 5, St. Peter teaches us that lying to the Holy Spirit means lying to God. And as long as He is **"the Spirit of God" (2 Cor. 3: 3)**, thereby He IS God, the Comforter, who came upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4), and He is the one that God promised in the book of Joel the prophet saying: **"And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions."**(John 2:28). And St. Peter mentioned that this prophecy was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:16,17).

In reprimanding what Ananias and Sapphira did, Saint Peter said: **"How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord?" (Acts 5:9)**, which is **"the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father" (John 15:26)**. The Holy Spirit proceeds only from the Father, and the verse is clear.



The Divine Characteristics of the Holy Spirit

- **One with the Father and the Son:** Our Lord Jesus Christ said to His holy apostles, **“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matt 19:28)** The Lord said, “in the **name**” and not ‘names’.
- **Giver of life:** as described in the Orthodox Creed. He is called **"the Spirit of life." (Romans 8:2)** He revives the dead as mentioned in Ezekiel 37:9-10.
- **Inspiration:** “Spoke by the prophets”, as described in the Orthodox Creed. The Holy Spirit is the source of inspiration.
“for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21)

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine.” (2 Timothy 3:16)
- **Eternal:** He participated with the Father and the Son in the creation:
“You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; And You renew the face of the earth.” (Psalm 104:30)

“The Spirit of God has made me” (Job 33:4)
- **Omnipresent** (i.e. present everywhere at the same time): That is why David the Prophet said, **"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?" (Psalm 139:7,8)** Of course the only One who is everywhere is God.
- **All-knowing:** **“Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:11)**
- **Omnipotent:** He is described as the Spirit of might (Isaiah 11:2). **“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, Says the Lord of hosts.” (Zechariah 4:6).**
- The Holy Spirit is He who **grants talents:** **“But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.” (1 Corinthians 12:11)**



The Symbols of the Holy Spirit in the Holy Bible

- Dove:** mentioned in the story of the Lord's baptism, **"He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him."** (Matthew 3:16) Therefore, the Church, or the human soul when filled with the Holy Spirit, is likened to a dove (Song of Solomon 5:2).
- Water:** Water symbolizes the Spirit since it is the source of life. In this, king David says of the righteous man that **"He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water,"** (Psalm 1)
 - Our Lord says about Himself **"They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters"** (Jeremiah 13: 2)
 - **"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."** (John 7:38,39)
 - This living water was mentioned by Christ in His conversation with the Samaritan woman (John 4:10,14).
 - The symbol of water to the Holy Spirit appears clearly in Baptism, where we are born from water and the Spirit.
- Oil:** As we see in the Sacrament of the Unction of the Sick, or the Holy Myron.
 - Anointing with oil was used in the Old Testament for sanctification of utensils used in the house of God.
 - Samuel the prophet anointed Saul and David as kings by it. Through this holy anointing, the Lord's Spirit comes upon the anointed one, with a gift from the Holy Spirit, which is the gift of prophecy.
- Fire:** This appeared on the day of the "Pentecost" when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples as **"divided tongues, as of fire, And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."** (Acts 2:3,4)
 - The Bible also says: **"our God is a consuming fire."** (Hebrews 12: 29)
- Wind:** The Greek word " πνεύμα " (pronounced 'Epnevma') means 'wind' or 'soul'. **"The wind blows where it wishes,"** (John 3:8). And we see the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost: **"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house."** (Acts 2:2)
 - Our Lord Jesus Christ granted the Holy Spirit to the disciples in the authority of the priesthood when He breathed on them saying, **"Receive the Holy Spirit."** (John 20:22) This breath was like wind. This is what the Bishop does during the ordination of the priest. The bishop breathes in his mouth saying: **"Accept the Holy Spirit"**. The priest responds, **"I opened my mouth and panted."** (Psalm 119:131)



The Holy Spirit and the Bible

1- The Holy Spirit is the Guardian of Church Teaching



- The Holy Spirit guards the Holy Bible. He preserved it from all mistakes when written by His inspiration. **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” (2 Timothy 3:16)**
- The Holy Spirit works in the congregation of believers to guard the sound teaching and to guard the Gospel. This, however, happens in the group of saints and not the group of heretics and violators of sound teaching.

**“But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord:
I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts;
and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” (Jeremiah 31: 31-33).**

2- The Holy Spirit Chooses Servants

- **The beginning of the Church:** Christ chose the apostles and sent them to preach and serve. However, He did not allow them to start preaching until after the Holy Spirit came upon them. For it was the Holy Spirit who gave them power.

“Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” (Luke 24:49)

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

- **The Holy Spirit is the one who moves the servants:**
 - In the story of the Eunuch’s baptism, he who was reading the prophecy of Isaiah in his chariot: **“Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go near and overtake this chariot.” (Acts 8:29)**
 - In the story of Cornelius’s baptism, when his men arrived to Peter, **“the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.” (Acts 10:19,20)**
 - In the service of St. Paul and St. Silas **“they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them..” (Acts 16:6,7)** Finally, He invited them to preach in Macedonia.
 - In St. John’s vision, he says, **“And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem” (Revelations 21:10)**
 - St. Paul the Apostle says, **“And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there.” (Acts 20:22)**

- **The Spirit is the One who speaks by the mouths of servants and gives the word**
 - **“for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” (Matt. 10:20).**
 - St. Peter the Apostle said, **“for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:21).**
 - On the Day of Pentecost the disciples **“began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (Acts 2:4)** For this reason, we say in the Orthodox Creed about the Holy Spirit, **“who spoke by the prophets.”**
 - St. Paul the Apostle said, **“that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches” (1 Corinthians 2:12,13)**

3- The Holy Spirit is the Source of Inspiration

In the old days, the law was written on stone tablets by the finger of God. But God promised that it would be written on our hearts. The Bible is written on our hearts.

“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.” (John 14:26)

We see this promise fulfilled when the disciples began writing the Gospels. They remembered the words of Jesus even after many years have passed. The Holy Spirit inspired and reminded them.

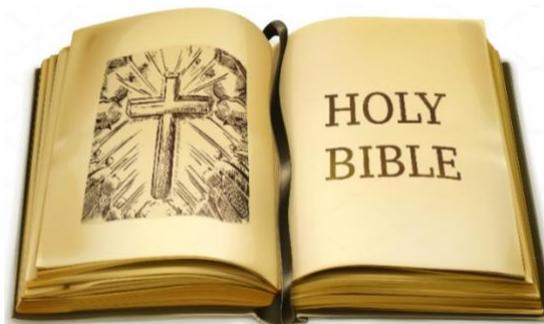
4- The Word of God is Spirit and Life

The Holy Bible is the word of God. Our Lord said, **“The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6: 63)** It is nourishment for our spirit that it would have life.

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.”

(Matthew 4:4)

Our spirits are nourished by the word of God which is in His Holy Book.



Divine Wisdom and Sanctifying the Mind

St. James the apostle explains the divine wisdom in the verse **“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.”** (James 3:17)

Characteristics of God’s Wisdom

1. **Pure:** free of all sin, unlike the human wisdom that is stained with weakness, greed, and personal desires.
2. **Peaceable:** full of meekness, calmness and peace; while relying on human thought means arrogance and pride and leads to anger and disagreements.
3. **Gentle:** patient and aims to win souls of others.
4. **Willing to yield:** accepting of self-correction and open to listen to different opinions. It lets one yield to the truth, which is from God.
5. **Full of mercy:** caring, sensitive, and not arrogant; has empathy for others and respects their feelings. It is kind to others in their wrongdoing in order to bring them to Christ.
6. **Good fruits:** has the fruit of the Holy Spirit **“love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.”** (Galatians 5:2,23)
7. **Without partiality or hypocrisy:** free of skepticism; trusts in God’s will and able to discern it.
 - **“that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, the eyes of your understanding being enlightened”** (Ephesians 1:17-18)
 - **“Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”** (Ephesians 5:17)
 - **“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ”** (Philippians 1:9,10)



Dangers of Human Wisdom

Human wisdom is stained by sin and leads to jealousy, partiality, and everything bad; that is because it is earthly, stemming from emotions and instincts, and led by the devil. Therefore, man should be aware of it. **“There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” (Proverbs 16:25)** so **“Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and depart from evil.” (Proverbs 3:7)** because you are limited in intellect, abilities, and knowledge.

It is better to admit this and ask God for His will to be done in your life for He is a loving father who is all-powerful and all-knowledgeable.

Sanctifying the thoughts

Christians, especially youth, are sometimes faced with a struggle. We have earthly thoughts that need to be controlled and made to submit to the mind of Christ. We also strive to have the mind of Christ For, **“Who has known the mind of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 2:16)**

The Role of the Mind in Life

- 1- **The beginning of action:** anyone won't take an action or do something unless they think about it first. The mind is then the beginning of actions and habits.
- 2- **Plans life:** a person will think and plan for short term and long-term goals in their life. One can decide to walk with God or live away from Him.
- 3- **Expresses what's in the heart:** expresses one's feelings. A heart filled with God's love will lead the mind to good thoughts.



Types of thoughts

- **Negative thoughts:** lust, judging, discrimination, selfishness, envy, jealousy, etc. Let us pray to the Lord to give us the mind of Christ.
 - Purity instead of lust
 - Self-conviction instead of judging others
 - Spirit of sharing instead of discrimination and selfishness
 - Spirit of love to others instead of jealousy and envy
- **Positive thoughts:**
 - **Repentance** - not a feeling but an action; like the Prodigal son who arose and went to his father.
 - **Holiness** - **“Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:16)**
 - **“For this is the will of God, your sanctification.” (1 Thessalonians 4:3)**
 - **Giving** - **“It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20:35)**
 - **Eternal life** - remember the life to come in order to lead a spiritual life

Therefore, always examine yourself and your thoughts and strive to have the mind of Christ.

How to Have the Mind of Christ

- **Prayer.** One will have the mind of Christ if they always talk to Him and look to Him. Prayer is an open line of communication with God that makes Him always present.
- **The Holy Bible.** “The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.” (Psalm 119:130)



“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom” (Colossians 3:16)

- **Spiritual readings.** St. Anthony the Great said “Frequent reading disciplines the wandering mind.”
- **Self-examination** daily in the light of the Lord’s words. “And see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:24)
- **Repentance and Confession.** Ask for guidance from your father of confession.



A Cloud of Witnesses

“Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” Hebrews 12:1

Intercession in the Orthodox faith

1- Redemptive intercession (Propitiatory):

It is the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ for sinners in front of God the Father. The intercession He offered when He died for us on the Cross to forgive our sins.

This is specific to our Lord Jesus Christ alone since He is the one who took our place and paid the price of sin for us and redeemed us. He is the only mediator between God and man through the offering of His blood.

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus”
(1 Timothy 2:5)

2- Supplicatory intercession:

The intercession of the saints for us is merely a prayer on our behalf. It is an intercession of supplication which is talked about in the Holy Bible. “pray for one another.” (James 5:16)

Saints themselves asked people to pray for them, like St. Paul when he asked the Thessalonians to “Finally, brethren, pray for us.” (2 Thessalonians 3:1) and the Hebrews (13:18) and on many other occasions in the Holy Bible.

“praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints” (Ephesians 6:18)

Likewise, as the saints ask for our prayers, and we ask each other for prayers; we ought to ask the saints who have departed to paradise to pray for us



Examples of intercession

1- Abraham and Abimelech the king

Abraham had said that Sarah is his sister not his wife; so Abimelech took her to be with his women. Then the Lord appeared to him in a dream and warned him of death saying, **“Now therefore, restore the man’s wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live.”** (Genesis 20:7)

God could have just forgiven him, but Abraham had to pray for him as a condition for forgiveness.

2- Job and his friends (Job 42)

Here also, God made Job’s prayer a condition for forgiveness for his three friends. **“That the Lord said to Eliphaz the Temanite, “My wrath is aroused against you and your two friends, for you have not spoken of Me what is right, as My servant Job has. Now therefore, take for yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to My servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and My servant Job shall pray for you. For I will accept him, lest I deal with you according to your folly.”** (Job 42:7-8)

In both incidents, God wanted to honor his saints by accepting their intercession.

3- Abraham intercedes for Sodom

God allowed and gave Abraham a chance to intercede for the people of Sodom and accepted his intercession. This story showed the whole world how God honors His saints.

4- Moses intercedes for the people of Israel

God’s wrath was aroused because of the people’s sin that they left Him and worshiped the calf. But Moses interceded for them: **“Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people.” Exodus 32:12 and God accepted his intercession “So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people.”** (Exodus 32:14)

5- Intercessions of those who departed

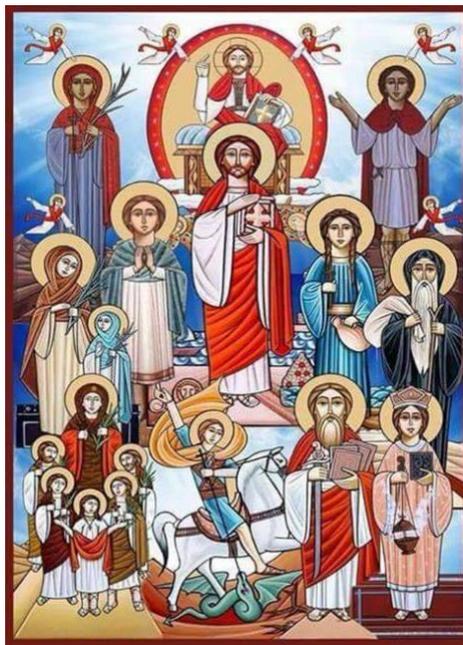
‘For the sake of David My servant’. God did not allow the split of the kingdom in the time of Solomon for the sake of David his father; **“Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David”** (1 Kings 11:12) This also was mentioned on many occasions in the Holy Bible.

If this was the honor God gave David; how much more would be the honor He would give to St. Mary His mother; the angels; and St. John the Baptist, the greatest among those born of women? How much more would be the honor He would give to the martyrs who suffered and offered their lives for His sake?



Spirituality of Intercession of the Saints

- 1- Asking for the intercession of the saints shows our belief in life after death. **“I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (Matthew 22:32)**
- 2- Intercession is a blessing and love between the members of the one body, the church. Christ is the head, and we are the members here on earth (striving church) and in heaven (victorious church).
- 3- Those who believe receive the benefits and blessings of intercession. Those who don't are at a loss.
- 4- Asking for intercession implies humility of the heart.
- 5- Intercession shows how God is just. If the devil was given a chance to tempt the children of God, the angels and saints also are given a chance to intercede for them and ask for their forgiveness.
- 6- Intercession shows how God gives honor to His saints. **“If anyone serves Me, him My Father will honor.” (John 12:26)**

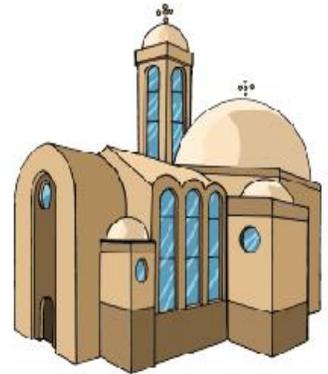


My Coptic Church

What distinguishes the Coptic Church from other churches?

1. It is the only church prophesied about in the Old Testament. **“In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar to the Lord at its border... and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day.” (Isaiah 19:10-21)**

This is not an idol altar since it is an ‘altar for the Lord’ and it is not a Jewish altar because they could not have an altar outside of Jerusalem.



2. Egypt is the only country that the Lord Jesus Christ visited while He was on earth (Matthew 2). He spent around 4 years there and performed many miracles; and churches were built in the different places that the Holy Family visited.
3. In it was established the first theological school in the whole world; the Theological School of Alexandria. It is the school where the sound Christian faith was taught with simplicity and without change.
4. This is the Church that defended the faith against heresies, especially the Arian heresy. St. Athanasius defended the faith at the Council of Nicaea where the Orthodox Creed was formulated. St. Jerome said, “The whole world almost followed Arius if it wasn’t for Athanasius.”
5. The Coptic Church is the Mother of Monasticism. St. Anthony, the first and father of all monks, was from the Church of Egypt. St. Pachom who established many monasteries was also a Copt.
6. The Coptic Church is the Mother of the martyrs. She offered, and still offers, the largest number of martyrs for the faith throughout the ages. This helped spread the faith in the whole world.
7. God Himself is the source of her teachings through His Apostles and priests. **“For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.” (Matthew 10:20)**
8. This is the Church of the sound faith. She was very keen from the very beginning to keep the faith unchanged throughout generations. The early fathers of the church were faithful in their teaching of the sound faith to the generations after them as they received it from the Apostles themselves. **“And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” (2 Timothy 2:2)**

Atheism

Introduction

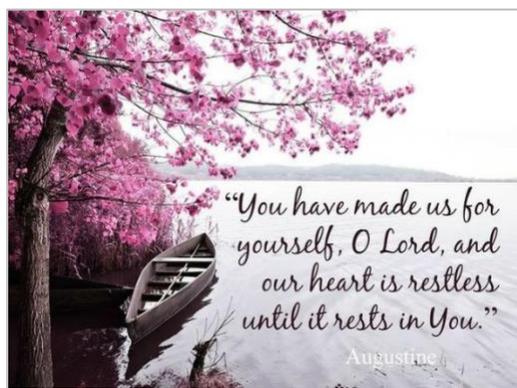
Atheism is the rejection or the lack of the belief that God exists. Atheists believe that God is a man-made myth or legend. The word “atheism” comes from the negative “a” which means “no” and “theos” which means “God”. Hence, atheism in the most basic terms means “no God”. Studies show that there are hundreds of millions who identify as Atheists around the world making Atheism one of the most growing “belief systems” in the modern world.

Brief History

The attempt to deny the truth of Gods existence is an ancient yet modern phenomenon; it existed hundreds of years before Christ. King David mentions in his Psalms those who reject the presence of God, **“The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.” (Psalm 14:1)** Modern atheism began as a phenomenon with the beginning of the European Renaissance (14th - 17th centuries). By the 18th century, disbelief in God was getting more popular, and by the end of the century, many philosophers in England, France, and Germany were openly opposing all religious figures and asking to establish laws protecting the right to unbelief.

In the 19th century, in spite of all the scientific development, science was still unable to explain all truths. Man started developing theories that explain the creation of the universe and the existence of human beings such as Darwin's Theory of Evolution. Darwin and those who followed his school of thought spent a great deal of effort to prove that science and religion cannot be reconciled, and that religion is holding back scientific development. By the 20th century, many outspoken Atheists became more popular; authors, politicians, movements, etc. leading more people to become skeptic of God’s existence.

However, scientific progress is not the actual cause of atheism! It is an individual problem that is built on man’s adherence to certain behavior that disturbs the conscience in order to deny God’s existence. It is an attempt to get rid of God’s voice which calls us to repentance. Hence, no one can truly find peace in their life except through God and in living their life in His fellowship as St. Augustine said, **“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in You.”**



Atheism arguments

Atheists claim that God does not exist, while Agnostics argue that there is not enough evidence to prove God's existence. Atheists typically rely on some arguments and questions that are unanswered in their minds which make them question the existence of God, for example:

1. Intellectual arguments

- a. Using what seems to be logical questions to support their views, atheists struggle with believing in a god who they cannot see? Forgetting that we believe in many things that we do not see like having Oxygen in the air we breathe; we do not see it yet we never question its existence!
- b. Another argument Atheists use is, "who created God?" And why does He allow suffering and pain? Forgetting that we as humans are a creation and can never fully comprehend our Creator. The same way a robot cannot fully comprehend its builder, or a computer program cannot fully explain its programmer; a god that can be fully comprehended is not God. We learn about God through His revelation to us not through our advanced intelligence.



2. Scientific arguments

- a. Many scientists go out of their way to develop scientific theories regarding the creation of the universe, misunderstanding the Holy Bible, and arguing that Christianity is in conflict with science; forgetting that such theories are only experimental theories subject to flaws and errors and that the Holy Bible is not a science book. It is the word of God for our edification and salvation and is not meant to be taken on trial against scientific theories which are not proven as facts to this day!

3. The flaws of the religious community

- a. Atheists often point out the weaknesses of the believers and religious leaders in an effort to disregard their validity and authority. Forgetting that a true Christian would never claim perfection and holiness of life but rather would admit his weakness and be in constant pursuit of perfection according to God's commandments. St. John Chrysostom said: **"The church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints"**.

4. Other misconceptions about God

- a. Atheists often spread many misconceptions about God as a restrictor of humans' freedom and against human creativity and independent reasoning. Forgetting that God is the one who gave humanity its reasoning accompanied with free will: whether we choose to obey His commandments or not and bear the consequences that follows our behavior.

God's existence is proved by His revelation

The Holy Bible does not ask us to accept the existence of God blindly. Instead, it shows us how God, by His Spirit, has revealed Himself to us, both in the past and in the present.

1. God is revealed through His creation

Clement of Rome said, **"God is manifest even by the operations of the world which He has made, using the evidence of His creation"**

There is no doubt that the universe reveals to us its creator and artist; its complexity and order teaches us about our wonderful God and His amazing work of creation as St. Paul declared, **"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20)** How can anything run in such great order without a perfect Creator who allows it to be and live. King David also shows us how contemplating on nature shows us God's handiwork and increases our knowledge of Him.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge." (Psalm 19:1-2)

God Himself declared His power and eternity to Job pointing at His work of creation when He spoke to him from a whirlwind; World's formation (Job:38:4-6) The heavens (v.7) The balance between seas and land (v. 8-11) The dawn (v.12) The seas' depths (v.16) The life-death cycle (v.17) The origin of light (v.19) The winds (v.24) The hydrological cycle (v. 25-30) Animals nurturing their young (v. 39-41)

"By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible." (Hebrews 11:3)



2. God is revealed through His communication

As mentioned earlier, our knowledge of God is through His revelation to us. Since the beginning of time, God revealed Himself. He did not cease to communicate with His most sophisticated creation: mankind. He communicated with mankind both in direct and indirect ways.

He directly spoke with Adam and Eve. Cain heard His voice clearly and answered Him. More Godly men had direct conversations with God like Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. God's existence was obvious to them as they heard from Him in a way that made His existence undeniable.

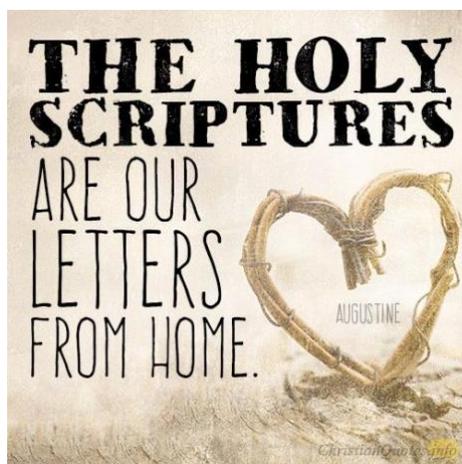
God also spoke to many through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. God revealed Himself by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit to 40 authors and prophets over about 1500 years to write a series of books that later were collected which we now call "the Holy Bible"!

"Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)

Through these scriptures, God revealed to us more and more about Himself, His commandments, His will, His works, and what pleases Him.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

When we look at the Holy Bible, we realize that it is not a mere collection of writing by common people. It is a perfectly orchestrated story woven throughout the books even though there was no way of collaboration between the authors. As St. Augustine put it, **"The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed."** The Holy Bible tells us the story of God's love for us and His marvelous economy of our salvation, amazingly preserved through thousands of years leading us to realize how miraculously the Holy Bible has been safeguarded.



3. God is revealed through the incarnation of Christ

“God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2)

Although God revealed Himself to mankind either by speaking directly or indirectly through His prophets, the ultimate revelation was through the incarnation of the Logos, our Lord Jesus Christ!

During His life on earth, the Lord Jesus Christ revealed the personality and character of God to us. People saw the Lord walking, talking, teaching, healing the sick, and raising the dead and they had a true human experience with God. He was loved and followed by many as He touched their hearts and changed their lives. Hence everywhere He went, He was followed by multitudes. St. John proclaimed this truth in his first epistle **“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life” (1 John 1:1)**

Therefore, by looking at our Lord Jesus Christ and learning from His life on earth, we know more about God and His existence.

4. God is revealed through our own consciences

An interesting event took place in the book of Acts, Chapter 17; when St. Paul went to Athens and wanted to preach the One true God to the Athenians. He stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, **“Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you” (Acts 17:22-23)**

This is no surprise as mankind always had the longing to know its creator. From the beginning of time, man always searched for God. It is in our nature, to long for Him who created us, loved us, and holds the whole world in His hand. We see this longing in the story of St. Moses the Strong when he was enslaved by people who worshipped the sun. In spite of his sinful life, one day he lifted up his eyes and looked towards saying, *“O Sun! If you are God, let me know it.”* Then he said, *“And you O God whom I do not know, let me know you.”* One day, he heard a voice saying to him, *“The monks of Wadi El-Natroun know the real God. Go to them and they will tell you.”* That was the spark of his life of repentance and sainthood.

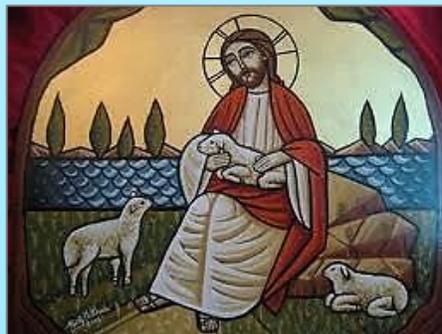
St. Paul explained this truth extensively in his epistle to the Romans, **“because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them” (Romans 1:19)** Meaning that, while all humans were born with a knowledge of God’s existence, some may choose to proclaim it, and some choose to **“suppress the truth in unrighteousness” (Romans 1:18).**

Memorization

1. Third Watch of the Midnight Hour of the Agpeya- The Gospel according to St. Luke (Luke 12:32-46)

“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell what you have, and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches, nor moth corrupts. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Let your loins be girded, and your lamps burning. And you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks, they may open to him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom their master, when he comes will find them watching. Assuredly I say to you, that he shall gird himself, and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and finds them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have allowed his house to be broken into. You therefore be ready also, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think.” Then Peter said to Him, “Lord, do you speak this parable only to us, or to all people?” And the Lord said, “Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his master when he comes will find so doing. Truly I say to you, that he will make him ruler over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ and begins to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and be drunk, the master of that servant will come in a day when he is not looking for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in two, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.”

Glory to God forever. Amen.



2. Sayings of the Fathers:

- ❖ "The Holy Spirit is no respecter of persons, for He seeks not dignities but piety of soul. Let neither the rich be puffed up nor the poor be rejected, but only let each prepare himself for reception of the heavenly gift." – St. Cyril of Jerusalem
- ❖ "[The Holy Spirit] In union with them, and when moved by Him the prophets announced what God willed. For they spoke not of their own power" – Hippolytus of Rome
- ❖ "To search the sacred Scripture is very good and most profitable for the soul. For, "like a tree which is planted near the running waters," so does the soul watered by sacred Scripture also grows hearty and bear fruit in due season. This is the orthodox faith. It is adorned with its evergreen leaves, with actions pleasing to God." – St. John of Damascus
- ❖ "There is need of spiritual wisdom, that we may perceive things spiritual, that we may see things hidden." – St. John Chrysostom
- ❖ "For he that has learned God, and knows God, shall no longer dispute concerning anything. He will not say, this is impossible and that is possible, and How did the other thing come to pass? If we learn God, as we ought to know Him; if we learn God from Him from whom we ought to learn Him, that is from the Spirit Himself; then shall we no longer dispute concerning anything." – St. John Chrysostom



Coptic



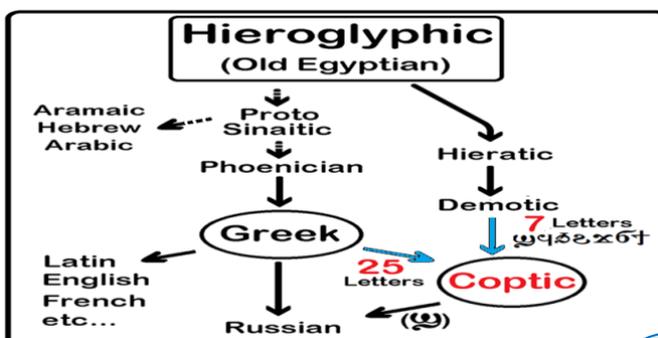
Our Lord spent about four years in Egypt as a baby. He spoke to the people of Egypt in their language, which was Coptic at that time.

THE COPTIC ALPHABET

	Α α Alpha A	Β β Veeta B, V	Γ γ Gamma G, N, Gh	Δ δ Delta D, Th (the)	
Ε ε Eyy E	Ϝ ϝ Number 6 So-oo Not a true letter The number 6	Ζ ζ Zeeta Z	Η η Eeta EE	Θ θ Theeta TH (think), T	Ι ι Yota I, Y
Κ κ Kappa K	Λ λ Lavla L	Μ μ Mey M	Ν ν Ney N	Ξ ξ Eksee KS	Ο ο O O
Π π Pee P	Ρ ρ ro R	Ϛ ϛ seema S-Z	Τ τ tav T	Υ υ Epsilon V, I, (oo)	Φ φ Fey F
Χ χ Key K, Kh, Sh	Ψ ψ Epsee PS	Ω ω Oo Oo	Ϙ ϙ Shai SH	Ϡ ϡ Fai F	Ϣ ϣ Khai KH
	Ϥ ϥ Hori H	Ϧ ϧ Ganga G, J	Ϩ ϩ Cheema CH	Ϫ ϫ Tee Tee	

The Coptic Alphabet has 32 letters

- 24 consonants
- 7 vowels (Α Ε Η Ι Ο Υ Ω)
- 1 letter used only as a number (Ϝ)



First 25 letters from Hieroglyphic through Proto-Sinaitic, Phoenician and Greek Alphabets

Last 7 letters from Hieroglyphic through Hieratic and Demotic

ⲛⲟϥⲣⲓ	hi
ⲛⲟϥⲣⲓ ⲡⲈⲚⲚⲏⲃ	Hi Sayedna
ⲛⲟϥⲣⲓ ⲡⲈⲚⲓⲱⲧ	Hi Abouna
ⲟϥϫⲁⲓ	Bye
ⲟϥϫⲁⲓ ⲉⲚ ⲡⲃⲟⲓϥ	Bye (in the Lord)



Pronunciation

Pronunciation of the letter Key “ϫ”

The letter is among the letters taken from the Greek Alphabet. In Greek, the sound of this letter is not among the sounds present in the Coptic pronunciation. But in Coptic words, it is always pronounced with the sound “k”.

We should first note that Greek words found in the Coptic Liturgy are two kinds:

1. Pure Greek hymns included in the Coptic Liturgy to retain non-Coptic Christians in Egypt in the Coptic Church.
2. “Loan words” that became part of the Coptic Language. Like the Greek Loan words in the English language: e.g. deacon, martyr, psychic, etc.)

When trying to pronounce the Greek loan words in English, e.g. the loan word “deacon”, it is pronounced using the English way to pronounce it and not the original Greek pronunciation.

So when we pronounce Greek loan words in Coptic, we should use the Coptic way to pronounce them.

Therefore, the Greek loan words “**ⲡⲥⲓⲕⲏ**” and “**ⲈⲚⲕⲏ**” would be pronounced “psikee” and “evkee”.

Tenses: Present, Past, Future I, We

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
1 st Person	I	ἄ ψάλλω I pray	ἔ να ψάλλω I will pray	ἔ ψάλλω I prayed	οὐκ ἔψάλλω I did not pray
	We	τε ψάλλω We pray	τε ἔνα ψάλλω We will pray	ἔ ψάλλω We prayed	οὐκ ἔψάλλω We did not pray

You (M., F., Pl.)

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
2 nd person	You (s.m.)	κ ἄλλω You pray	ἔ να ψάλλω You will pray	ἔ κἄλλω You prayed	οὐκ ἔκἄλλω You did not pray
	You (s.f.)	τε ψάλλω You pray	τε ἔνα ψάλλω You will pray	ἔ ρε ψάλλω You prayed	οὐκ ἔρε ψάλλω You did not pray
	You (pl.)	τετε ψάλλω You pray	τετε ἔνα ψάλλω You will pray	ἔ ρε τε ψάλλω You prayed	οὐκ ἔτε ψάλλω You did not pray

He, She, They

		Present Tense	Future Tense	Past Tense	Negative Past Tense
3 rd person	He	ἐ ψάλλω He prays	ἐ να ψάλλω He will pray	ἔ ψάλλω He prayed	οὐκ ἔψάλλω He did not pray
	She	ἔ ψάλλω She prays	ἔ να ψάλλω She will pray	ἔ σε ψάλλω She prayed	οὐκ ἔσε ψάλλω She did not pray
	They	σε ψάλλω They pray	σε ἔνα ψάλλω They will pray	ἔ σαν ψάλλω They prayed	οὐκ ἔσαν ψάλλω They did not pray

Negative Present and Future tenses are formed by
ΔΝ or **Ν̇....ΔΝ**

Examples

Present **CEΨΛΗΛ ΔΝ** or **Ν̇CEΨΛΗΛ ΔΝ**

Future **CEΝΔΨΛΗΛ ΔΝ** or **Ν̇CEΝΔΨΛΗΛ ΔΝ**

Practice Present, Future and Past tenses
and their negatives with the following verbs

†**ḲΒΩ** to teach

βἱḲΒΩ to learn

† to give

βἱ to take, receive

οῤωψῤ to worship

ψεπḲμοῤ to give thanks

ἱ to come

Ḳω† to save, redeem

Ḳμοῤ to bless, praise

ḲωḲ to sing, chant

Ḳωοῤῆ to know

ḲαḲ† to believe

ḲεμḲἱ to sit down

ḲεῤḲεῤ to snore

ωψ to read

ḲḲαι to write

οῤωμ to eat

Ḳω to drink

Conversations

ḲοḲῤἱ Hi

οῤḲαι Bye

ψεπḲμοῤ Thanks

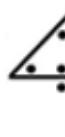
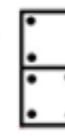
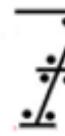
Ḳμοῤ Ḳαι You're welcome (for nothing)

Numbers

At the time of developing the Coptic Script, all known languages at that time were using their alphabets as numbers. (e.g. Copts, Greeks, Arabs, Hebrews)

	Coptic			Greek		Arabic		Hebrew	
1	ⲟⲣⲁⲓ	ⲁ̅	Alpha	α	Alpha	ا	Alef	א	Aleph
2	ϥⲛⲁⲣ	ⲃ̅	Veeta	β	Beta	ب	Baa	ב	Beth
3	ϣⲟⲙⲧ	Ⲅ̅	Gamma	γ	Gamma	ج	Geem	ג	Gimel
4	ϥⲧⲟⲣ	ⲅ̅	Delta	δ	Delta	د	Dal	ד	Daleth
5	ϥⲓⲟⲣ	Ⲇ̅	Ey	ε	Epsilon	ه	Haa	ה	He
6	ϥⲟⲟⲣ	Ⲉ̅	So-o	?	?	و	Waw	ו	Waw
7	ϣⲁⲣⲣ	ⲉ̅	Zeeta	ζ	Zeta	ز	Zayn	ז	Zayin

Later on, the current numbering system (1, 2, 3...) was developed from the system used by **the Phoenician sailors**, where the number of angles in the figure indicated the number.

Phoenician Figures					
Number of Angles	1	2	3	4	5
Phoenician Figures					
Number of Angles	6	7	8	9	0

The Coptic Numbers
(at the time of writing most Coptic manuscripts)

100	ⲡ	ϣⲉ	10	Ⲓ	ⲙⲏⲧ	1	ⲁ	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ
200	Ⲅ	ϥⲛⲁⲩ ϣⲉ	20	ⲕ	ϫⲟⲩⲧ	2	ⲃ	ϥⲛⲁⲩ
300	Ⲉ	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ	30	ⲗ	ⲙⲁⲡ	3	Ⲅ	ϣⲟⲙⲧ
400	Ⲓ	ϥⲧⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	40	ⲙ	ϩⲙⲉ	4	ⲗ	ϥⲧⲟⲩ
500	Ⲇ	ϥⲧⲱⲩ ϣⲉ	50	ⲛ	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	5	ⲉ	ϥⲧⲱⲩ
600	Ⲙ	ϥϫⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	60	Ⲛ	ϥⲉ	6	Ⲉ	ϥϫⲟⲩ
700	Ⲕ	ϣⲁⲣⲥ ϣⲉ	70	ⲟ	ϣⲃⲉ	7	Ⲛ	ϣⲁⲣⲥ
800	Ⲡ	ϣⲙⲏⲏ ϣⲉ	80	ⲡ	ϩⲁⲙⲛⲉ	8	ⲏ	ϣⲙⲏⲏ
900	Ⲕ	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ	90	ϥ	ⲡⲓϥⲧⲁⲩ	9	Ⲑ	ϣⲓⲧ

How to say the numbers in Coptic

100	ϣⲉ	10	ⲙⲏⲧ	1	ⲟⲩⲁⲓ
200	ϥⲛⲁⲩ ϣⲉ	20	ϫⲟⲩⲧ	2	ϥⲛⲁⲩ
300	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ	30	ⲙⲁⲡ	3	ϣⲟⲙⲧ
400	ϥⲧⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	40	ϩⲙⲉ	4	ϥⲧⲟⲩ
500	ϥⲧⲱⲩ ϣⲉ	50	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	5	ϥⲧⲱⲩ
600	ϥϫⲟⲩ ϣⲉ	60	ϥⲉ	6	ϥϫⲟⲩ
700	ϣⲁⲣⲥ ϣⲉ	70	ϣⲃⲉ	7	ϣⲁⲣⲥ
800	ϣⲙⲏⲏ ϣⲉ	80	ϩⲁⲙⲛⲉ	8	ϣⲙⲏⲏ
900	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ	90	ⲡⲓϥⲧⲁⲩ	9	ϣⲓⲧ

How to write and read numbers		
12	ⲙⲏⲧ ⲛⲏⲁⲩ	ⲓⲃ̄
24	ϫⲟⲩⲧ ϣ̣ⲧⲟⲩ	ⲕⲗ̄
49	Ϸⲙⲉ ϣⲓⲧ	ⲙⲑ̄
50	ⲧⲉⲃⲓ	ⲛ̄
72	ϣ̣ⲃⲉ ⲛⲏⲁⲩ	ⲟⲃ̄
100	ϣⲉ	ⲡ̄
111	ϣⲉ ⲙⲏⲧ ⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲡⲓⲁ̄
318	ϣⲟⲙⲧ ϣⲉ ⲙⲏⲧ ϣ̣ⲙⲏⲏ	ⲧⲓⲏ̄
200	ⲛⲏⲁⲩ ϣⲉ	ϥ̄
666	ϥⲟⲟⲩ ϣⲉ ϥⲉ ϥⲟⲟⲩ	ϫⲗⲉ̄
969	ϣⲓⲧ ϣⲉ ϥⲉ ϣⲓⲧ	ϣⲗⲑ̄

The Days of the week		
Day	Coptic	Other names
Sunday	ⲡⲓⲟⲩⲁⲓ	ⲡⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲏⲧⲉ ⲏ̄ⲃⲟⲓϥ (Coptic) ⲕⲣⲓⲣⲓⲁⲕⲏ (Greek) (means the day of the Lord.)
Monday	ⲡⲓϥⲏⲁⲩ	
Tuesday	ⲡⲓϣⲟⲙⲧ	
Wednesday	ⲡⲓϣ̣ⲧⲟⲩ	
Thursday	ⲡⲓⲧ̣ⲓⲟⲩ	
Friday	ⲡⲓϥⲟⲟⲩ	ⲡⲓⲉⲗⲟⲟⲩ ⲏⲧⲉ ⲡⲓϥⲟⲃⲧⲓ (Coptic) ⲡⲁⲣⲁϥⲕⲉⲩⲏ (Greek) (means the day of preparation.)
Saturday	ⲡⲓϣⲁⲣϥ	ⲡⲓϥⲁⲃⲃⲁⲧⲟⲏ (in Hebrew means rest).

ἸΝ ΤῆΣ ὀΝΟΜΑΤὸΣ τοῦ ΠΑΤΕΡΟῦ

In the Name of the Father

καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ

and the Son

καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος

and the Holy Spirit

ὁ ὁμοῦς ὁμοουσιος ὁ ἀληθινός

One God Amen



ΠΑΤΕΡ ἡΜῶΝ ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς
Our Father who art in Heaven

ἄξιόν ἐστιν ἡμῶν εὐχαριστήσασθαι

Make us worthy to say thankfully

ΠΑΤΕΡ ἡΜῶΝ ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς

Our father who art in heaven

ἁγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομα σου

Hallowed be Thy name

ἔλθῃ ἡ βασιλεία σου

Thy kingdom come

ὡς ἐστὶν ἐν οὐρανῷ

Thy will be done

ὡς ἐστὶν ἐν οὐρανῷ

On earth as it is in heaven

δός ἡμῖν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἡμέτερον

Give us this day our daily bread

καὶ ἄφες ἡμῶν τὰ ἑσθλά

And forgive us our trespasses

ὡς ἡμεῖς ἀφίμεθα

As we forgive

τοῖς ἁμαρτωλοῖς ἡμῶν

those who trespass against us

καὶ μὴ ἐλθέσθαι ἡμᾶς ἐν πειρασμῷ

And lead us not into temptation

ἀλλὰ ῥυθίμας ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐπιεισομένου

But deliver us from the evil one

Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ

In Christ Jesus our Lord

ὡς ἐστὶν

For Thine is

ἡ βασιλεία καὶ τὸ κράτος καὶ ἡ δόξα

the kingdom, the power and the glory,

εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα

forever, Amen

Hymns & Rituals



Raising of Incense Gospel Response

The Gospel Response for the Vespers and Matins Raising of Incense on annual days is the hymn **Ἐπισημασθῆναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν**. After the introductory verse, the verse for Saint Mary is chanted followed by a verse for any saints of the day, and a verse for the patron saint of the church, and then the conclusion **Ἐπισημασθῆναι**.

Let us worship our Savior, the Good One and Lover of Mankind, for He had compassion on us and has come and saved us.	Ἐπισημασθῆναι τὸν Ἰησοῦν: Πατριώμι ἠγάθος: ἕνεκεν ἡμῶν ἐσῆλθεν ἡσάρον: ἀπὸ οὐρα ἀσώτῃ ἡμῶν.
Intercede on our behalf, O Lady of us all the Theotokos, Mary the Mother of our Savior, that He may forgive us our sins.	Ἀντιπροσβέβηκεν ἐν ἡμῶν ἐξων: ὡς τῶν βουλομένων ἡμῶν τῆς ἁγίας Θεοτόκου: Μαρία ἡμῶν Ἐπισημασθῆναι: ἠντιμεῖται ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἐβουλή.
Blessed be the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit the perfect Trinity we worship Him and glorify Him.	Ἐπισημασθῆναι ἡμῶν Ἐπισημασθῆναι ἡμῶν Πνεύματι: ἡμῶν Πνεύματι ἁγίῳ: Ἐπισημασθῆναι ἡμῶν ἐβουλή: Ἐπισημασθῆναι ἡμῶν τῶν ἁγίων ἡμῶν.

Group Hymn

Loose, Remit

The hymn **Ἐπισημασθῆναι** is chanted in the Liturgy of St. Gregory after the Commemoration of the saints.

Loose, remit, and forgive us, O God, our iniquities which we have committed willingly and which we have committed unwillingly, which we have committed knowingly and which we have committed unknowingly; the hidden and the manifest, O Lord, remit for us.	Ἐπισημασθῆναι ἡμῶν ἐβουλή: ἠντιμεῖται ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἠντιμεῖται ἡμῶν: ἠντιμεῖται ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἠντιμεῖται ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἡμῶν: ἠντιμεῖται ἡμῶν ἡμῶν ἡμῶν:
--	---



Spirit & Life



Visit the St. Mark Festival's website at

www.smfsus.org

to find the material for the festival and for guidelines
and information on the tests